Rural and Ready: A Pathway for Improving Human Capital in Cross County Schools

Proposal Submitted under the Teacher Incentive Fund Program

CFDA 84.364A

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Cross County School District, Arkansas

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INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

"The TAP System provides meaningful learning and support that is tailored to the individual teacher's needs, resulting in a recipe for teacher and student success."
Principal, Cross County School District

Cross County School District (CC) in Cherry Valley, Arkansas is applying for a $3,473,379 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant with the primary goal of supporting, developing, and implementing a sustainable performance-based compensation system (PBCS) as part of CC's overall human capital management system (HCMS) that includes evaluation and support for educators, in order to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement. The project includes activities that will further develop local human capital and capacity to provide and enhance educational services that are required to improve teacher effectiveness in order for all students in CC's high-need schools to demonstrate academic growth. CC is a rural Local Education Agency (LEA) as defined by the state of Arkansas and the US Department of Education. CC will partner with a national non-profit focused on educator quality, as well as an Arkansas university to meet the goals of this project.

Through the *Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas* grant, CC schools will increase the rigor and reach of their HCMS by enhancing the implementation of *TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement*. The TAP System was developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) whose expertise is in educator evaluation and performance-based compensation systems. It is more than just a performance-based compensation system. It is a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce as it addresses the most important element in a school – human capital. It does so by working with teachers, principals and other school leaders to systematically increase their skills leading to improved student achievement. The TAP System consists of four elements:

- **Performance-based compensation,** which rewards teachers and principals who demonstrate effectiveness through multiple measures, including student growth, with differentiated levels of bonuses.

- **Multiple career paths,** which incentivize teachers to take on new leadership roles (mentor\master teacher) and additional responsibilities with corresponding growth in pay.

- **Instructionally focused accountability,** which provides an evaluation structure that is rigorous, transparent and fair with multiple measures, including student growth.

- **Ongoing applied professional growth,** which is continuous, job-embedded professional development that takes place during the regular school day in weekly "cluster groups." Professional development is focused on specific student, teacher and principal needs.

The TAP System has been implemented in the CC schools as partners in an earlier Teacher Incentive Fund grant. This new TIF grant will allow for expansion and enhancement of the comprehensive educator improvement system, building on the lessons learned and identification of areas in need of further innovation. Through TAP, schools will have expanded access to the data system called CODE allowing for schools to better use their data-driven HCM systems.

This project will also allow CC to work with the Arkansas Tech University School of Education's Center for Leadership and Learning (ATU) to recruit highly-skilled teachers, and to develop a reciprocal professional development partnership where expert faculty will work with and learn from CC teachers in the schools, and expert CC educators will share their knowledge and best practices with teacher candidates at ATU.

Addressing Local Needs

Cross County is located in the southeastern corner of Arkansas, with the nearest large town being Memphis, Tennessee, about 56 miles east. CC has a population of just under 20,000, and the Cross County School District is one of two districts in county. The largest town, Wynne, has its own district. Cross County School District consists of two schools, a high school and an elementary school, with administrative offices in Cherry Valley, a rural town with a population of just 616 (Retrieved 7/11/2016 from: http://www.city-data.com/city/Cherry-Valley-Arkansas.html). The district serves 636 students, 10% minority and 73% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In 2014, the middle school merged with the elementary school, creating two campuses that house the 636 students of the community. The elementary school and high school both offer a rigorous, academic curriculum for high-need, traditionally low-performing student populations. The chart below summarizes the key demographics of each school, demonstrating the high-need of the students across all campuses.

Table 1: CC School Eligibility

Name	Grade Levels	# Students	% FRL	# Teachers	# Principals	# Asst Principals
CC Elementary	K-6	343	74%	26	1	0
CC High School	7-12	283	73%	27	1	1

CC needs to develop bold incentives in order to attract, retain and motivate the most effective educators to their rural schools. Over the past five years, annual teacher turnover in the schools has ranged from 10-26% which is at or above the national annual turnover rate. Often the educators willing to come to CC are products of less rigorous, lower-quality alternative certification programs, or they are Teach for America students who by definition are not yet trained as teachers nor committed to stay beyond the two year program. As such, new teachers

are all too often unprepared to teach, struggle with their responsibilities and do not stay for more than one or two years. The most effective teachers are also drawn to larger city schools due to significantly higher salaries and more robust cultural and social communities. Beginning CC teachers earn $31,500, $5,500 less than in Wynne schools and nearly $11,000 less than Memphis, Tennessee first-year teachers (Tennessee Education Association, 2015).

Both schools will have full implementation of TAP and all aspects of the HCMS fully functioning in Year 1 of the grant, and will serve high-need students in schools with over 70% eligible for free and reduced lunch. Cross County will work closely with ATU to provide incentives and professional development focused on educator retention and effectiveness, as well as with NIET to ensure full implementation of the TAP System and ongoing access to trainings and support. Please see Appendix E for the MOU, which addresses all required information. TIF funds will only be used as specified in the TIF notice. See the budget narrative for additional detail.

Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas supports local commitment to increase expectations for classroom instruction

The mission of CC is to educate the whole child by preparing them to be life-long learners and responsible citizens in a global society. In order to succeed in a rapidly changing world, all students will be able to: think analytically, solve problems creatively, utilize technology appropriately, collaborate effectively and communicate articulately. The goal is for all students to reach proficiency and matriculate to the next level with adequate skills for success. CC makes data-determined decisions, using teacher and student data to develop professional development and student assessment processes. A shared philosophy within CC is that educator effectiveness is the primary driver of student achievement.

Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas builds local capacity

CC schools have been implementing the TAP System with the essential goal of building local capacity to improve educator effectiveness. Although teachers and administrators greatly value the data-driven, supportive culture that has developed through TAP implementation, there remains a struggle to attract and retain the most effective educators. Financial incentives are helpful; however, what has been learned is that for hardest-to-staff subjects and grade levels, the most effective educators are wooed away from CC by larger city districts that not only pay higher salaries, but also have stronger cultural and social communities.

Implementation of the TAP System aligns directly to the TIF Absolute Priority of implementing an LEA-wide Human Capital Management System (HCMS) with the core focus on educator evaluation and support systems, as well as the TIF Requirements of implementing a performance-based compensation system and documenting that schools participating in the implementation of the grant are high-need schools. This proposal also fully meets the Competitive Priorities of both supporting high-need students served by Rural LEAs and as a project that promotes equitable access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and minority students across and within district schools. Finally, the project meets the Invitational Priority of promoting equitable access by aligning to the State of Arkansas' plan to ensure equitable access to excellent educators.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

Plan of Action

Table 2: Project Goals

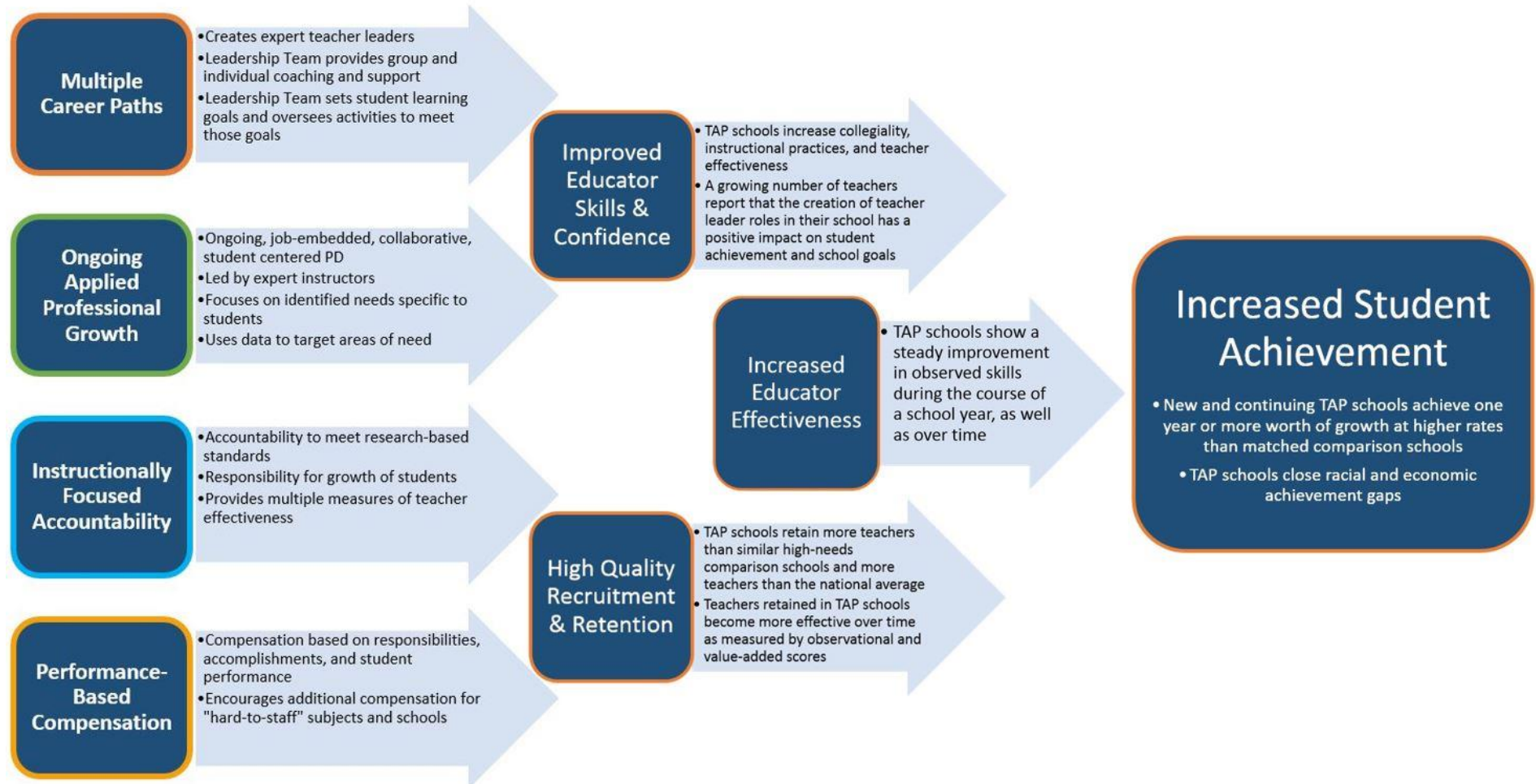| |
|---|
| ***Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas Project Goal:*** With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the *Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas* will leverage school, district, university and national non-profit resources to create |

sustainable model of rural educator effectiveness to be used as a model for Arkansas and the nation.
Objective One: CC will continue and enhance implementation of NIET's TAP System along with a comprehensive HCMS to foster educator excellence and student achievement.
Objective Two: In collaboration with ATU, CC will recruit highly-skilled teacher candidates to work in high-need classrooms. In addition, CC will collaborate with ATU to provide ongoing, professional development targeting specific needs of educators as well as provide reciprocal PD sharing lessons learned from rural district with ATU faculty and teacher candidates.
Objective Three: CC will contribute to the research and practice knowledge base on educator effectiveness systems that foster rural educator excellence and student learning. CC will partner with national organizations such as the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and NIET to share lessons learned from the *Promoting Educator Effectiveness in Rural Arkansas* project.

The extent to which the proposed project is supported by a strong theory

In order to meet the grant's Absolute Priority of developing an HMCS with educator evaluation and support systems at the center, as well as meeting requirements to implement a performance-based compensation system, educators in the high-need, rural schools in the *Partnership* have supported the adoption of the TAP System. TAP is a comprehensive school reform developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) with proven success in rural schools across the country.

Our plan of action to implement the TAP System is detailed in the Figure 1 logic model (also included in Appendix C) that is based on valid research and strong theory. Research supporting TAP includes studies demonstrating that effective leadership is characterized by collective responsibility (Elmore, 2000), and other work that finds student achievement and teacher learning increases when professional development is teacher-led, ongoing and collaborative (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Smylie, Allensworth, Greenberg, Harris, &

Figure 1: TAP Action Plan

Multiple Career Paths
- Creates expert teacher leaders
- Leadership Team provides group and individual coaching and support
- Leadership Team sets student learning goals and oversees activities to meet those goals

Ongoing Applied Professional Growth
- Ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative, student centered PD
- Led by expert instructors
- Focuses on identified needs specific to students
- Uses data to target areas of need

Instructionally Focused Accountability
- Accountability to meet research-based standards
- Responsibility for growth of students
- Provides multiple measures of teacher effectiveness

Performance-Based Compensation
- Compensation based on responsibilities, accomplishments, and student performance
- Encourages additional compensation for "hard-to-staff" subjects and schools

Improved Educator Skills & Confidence
- TAP schools increase collegiality, instructional practices, and teacher effectiveness
- A growing number of teachers report that the creation of teacher leader roles in their school has a positive impact on student achievement and school goals

Increased Educator Effectiveness
- TAP schools show a steady improvement in observed skills during the course of a school year, as well as over time

High Quality Recruitment & Retention
- TAP schools retain more teachers than similar high-needs comparison schools and more teachers than the national average
- Teachers retained in TAP schools become more effective over time as measured by observational and value-added scores

Increased Student Achievement
- New and continuing TAP schools achieve one year or more worth of growth at higher rates than matched comparison schools
- TAP schools close racial and economic achievement gaps

Luppescu, 2001). Further, there is evidence that states and school districts need to identify the knowledge and skills that a teacher needs to teach successfully, and then create standards and rubrics to measure teacher performance (Odden, Milanowski & Youngs, 1998; Odden and Clune, 1998). Other studies have shown that performance award programs are successful when integrated with strong leadership, professional development, reliable analysis of student performance and strong feedback. (Odden & Kelly 1996; Odden 2000). These studies, as well as the input of hundreds of teachers and administrators were used to develop the core elements of the TAP System.

The proposed project incorporates the following essential factors: 1) It is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students; 2) The services provided involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of the project services; 3) The project is supported by a strong theory; and, 4) The project builds upon similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes, using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, Sate, and Federal resources.

Absolute Priority: An LEA-wide Human Capital Management System (HCMS) with Educator Evaluation and Support Systems at the Center.

For the past five years, CC has used an LEA-wide HCMS that has at its core a comprehensive educator evaluation system characterized by a strong support structure for teachers and principals. The TAP System was developed by NIET to provide a fair, rigorous, valid, reliable, and objective educator evaluation system complimented with support for educator improvement, career advancement and performance-based compensation. Over a decade of research has demonstrated that schools implementing TAP demonstrate improved student achievement results. TAP provides teachers, principals, and other school leaders with ongoing,

differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement. The focus of the job-embedded professional develop is designed to support and improve educator effectiveness and, in turn, student achievement.

(1) Alignment with vision of instructional improvement:

CC has an ambitious vision of instructional improvement: all teachers must be effective enough such that all students to achieve *at least* one year's growth each school year. To achieve this goal, the schools focus on instructional accountability and data-driven, rigorous instruction centered on clearly defined state and school standards. The goal for educators is to teach each student at a challenging academic level in an environment that cultivates the individual needs of each child. To accomplish this goal, the collective instructional vision for CC provides that:

- Teachers will be able to differentiate instruction to meet individual students' needs.

- Instructional decisions will be based upon data analysis.

- Professional development will focus on the needs of teachers in order to improve student learning.

- Students will receive a well-rounded educational experience, preparing them for higher education and the workforce.

Figure 2: CC HCMS Alignment to Vision for Instructional Improvement
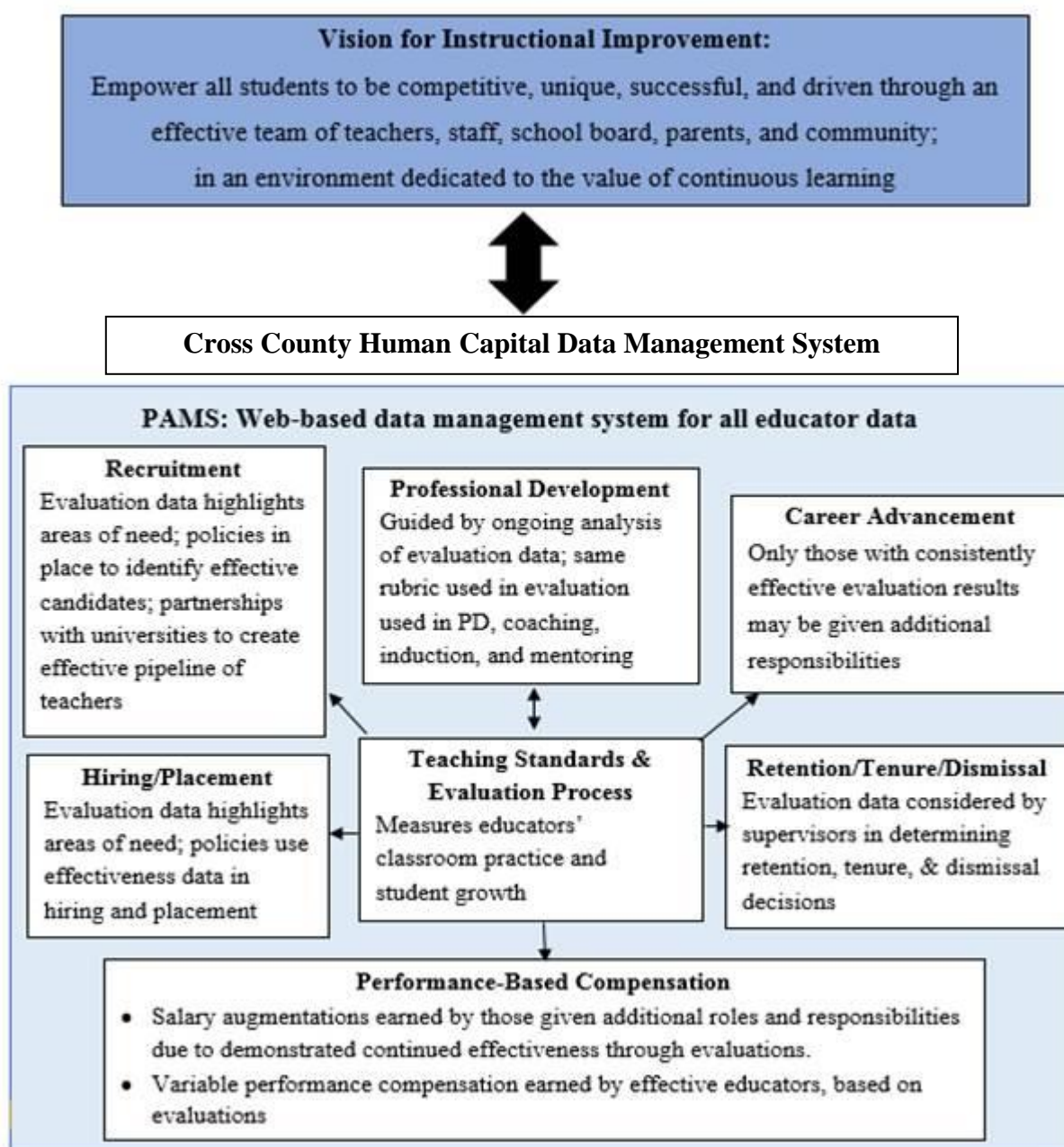
This alignment is true for principals as well. The current principal evaluation is the Arkansas Leadership Excellence and Development System (LEADS) rubric and holds CC principals and assistant principals accountable for multiple measures of leadership capabilities. In addition to LEADS, CC administrators are evaluated as part of the TAP System by the TAP Leadership Team (TLT) and the school-wide student achievement gains made on their campus.

Having teacher and principal evaluation systems that reflect the vision for instructional improvement, and using the data from the evaluation system to inform other human capital strategies (see following section for detail) ensures that the entire HCMS is aligned to the CC's vision for instructional improvement.

CC proposes to make innovative improvements to their existing HCMSs to ensure that they continue to meet the goals set for teachers and students, aligning to their vision for instructional improvement. Currently, the HCMS houses teacher evaluation, student achievement, and school accountability data. The project proposes to expand the functionality of the HCMS in order to better analyze and use data in real time.

(2) Use of information generated by Evaluation and Support System to inform key human capital decisions, such as recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, tenure, and promotion.

TAP's comprehensive teacher evaluation and support system allows CC leaders to use data to make human capital decisions including placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, and promotion. The results of teacher evaluations also drive the focus and goals of each school's professional development priorities, targeting specific needs of teachers and students within the school.

CC will continue to develop its educator-supportive culture, and to use educator effectiveness to inform decision making in all stages of the educator employment pipeline. TAP's evaluation system ensures that teachers are observed in classroom instruction multiple times a year by multiple trained observers, including principals and master and mentor teachers. Evaluators use a detailed instructional rubric that includes several dimensions of instructional effectiveness. Evaluators are trained and certified, and school leadership teams monitor the reliability and consistency of evaluations in their schools. The classroom evaluations are complemented by

analyzing student achievement growth, creating a multi-measure system of teacher evaluation. Data from teacher evaluations are managed through the TAP CODE system, the interactive human capital management system (HCMS) for storing and analyzing teacher evaluation and other school data. It is a web-based system that provides secure access to real-time data and analytics that allow school leaders to enter observation data, monitor evaluator inter-rater reliability, generate multiple reports, and calculate teacher effectiveness and performance-based compensation. CODE enables CC schools to connect valuation data to professional learning. This is accomplished through CODE's role as the "data backbone" of the HCMS which includes an explicit link to professional development (PD) through the TAP System Training Portal (see Appendix F). Based on evaluation results, CODE recommends specific areas for PD that a teacher may immediately access on the Portal, and which are highlighted in their Individual Growth Plan.

Currently, significant efforts are needed to improve recruitment and retention practices and build capacity within CC. Although the implementation of TAP has provided career advancement, professional development and salary augmentation for effective teachers, CC needs to do more in order to *retain* the most effective, most skilled teachers. Not only is CC losing effective teachers to larger city districts, but over the past few years, CC has relied heavily on Teach for America participants to fill open teaching positions. Over the past three years, Teach for America has seen a 35% drop in participants. This drop has had a disproportionate negative impact on rural schools, particularly those in less populated states such as Arkansas.

Through this grant, CC will partner with ATU to recruit up to two (2) highly-skilled teacher candidates in high-need subject areas each year with demonstrated teacher effectiveness characteristics that have been identified using the TAP rubrics. These candidates will go through a highly-selective hiring process, targeting the most difficult to fill positions in CC. These highly

promising pre-service teachers will receive a $10,000 stipend during their semester of pre-service teaching, which will take place in CC. These rigorously selected candidates will also be asked to make a three year commitment to teach in CC. Research has shown that teacher candidates become "invested" in the districts where they do their student teaching; hence, attracting highly skilled candidates during their pre-service will greatly increased the likelihood of these candidates staying in CC.

If the selectively recruited teachers are rated effective using the TAP System evaluation during their first year of teaching, they will receive a additional $10,000 bonus when they sign their Year 2 contract. If they are rated as effective in their second year, they will receive a another $10,000 bonus when they sign their Year 3 contract. This will occur as well for contracts signed for Year 4 and Year 5. In addition, all teachers, not just those hired through the targeted selection process, who are deemed effective, based on their annual evaluation, will be eligible for an additional $1,000 bonus upon signing the following year contract.

Recruiting and developing capacity to lead the schools is also a priority for CC. Additional significant incentives will be provided over the course of the grant for three (3) highly-effective teachers within the district who have demonstrated sustained effectiveness as educators to obtain their principal certification. These individuals will be provided with full tuition and fee reimbursement for their studies. Once the certification has been achieved, the educators will be given priority hiring status as administrative positions opened up in CC. As with the teacher, human capital decisions regarding principals and assistant principals are based on data collected and maintained through CC's HCMS. In summary, the following PBCS elements will be in place to attract and retain the most effective educators to CC.

Table 3: Performance Compensation

	Compensation Category	Amount
Master Teachers	Additional roles and responsibilities as described in the TAP System	$ 7,500
Mentor Teachers	Additional roles and responsibilities as described in the TAP System.	$ 4,000
Teachers	Performance compensation pool	$ 3,000
Principals	Performance compensation pool	$ 7,500
Assistant Principal	Performance compensation pool	$ 4,000
Teacher Retention	For effective teachers sign contract	$ 1,000
Highly Effective Teacher	Selective recruitment process in partnership with ATU to attract highly effective teachers	$ 10,000
Prospective Principals	Selection of effective educators to pursue administrative credentials	Tuition and Fees

Enhancements to HCMS: Through this project, the following enhancements to CC's HCMS will take place: 1) Additional teacher information collection, including each teacher's preparation program and years of experience, which the principal may use to inform future hiring decisions. 2) A more explicit link to professional development (PD) through the TAP System Training Portal. Based on evaluation results, CODE will recommend specific areas for PD that the teacher may immediately access on the Portal. 3) A simple query-builder that will allow principals to perform custom searches and analytics based on the specific needs at their school site.

    The following table details current human capital policies and data used for decisions, compared to new policies and data used for decisions under new policies or practices.

Table 4: Core Elements of CC TIF Proposal

HCMS Area	Current Policy/Practice	Data Used for Decisions under Current Policies	Modifications to Policy/Practice (developed through grant)	Evaluation and other Data To Inform new Policy/Practice
Recruitment	Educators are recruited through traditional means of posting positions, attracting candidates primarily from Teach for America and Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, AR.	Number of applicants per position	The grant will include targeted, significant resources to recruit hard-to-staff grades/subjects from ATU teacher candidates. Substantial bonuses tied to teacher effectiveness and retention will be used to improve recruitment strategies within the district. CC will continue to maintain its teacher-focused culture, and increase efforts to higher teacher candidates with demonstrated records of effectiveness as student teachers. Use of evaluation data to monitor effectiveness of highly-skilled Arkansas Tech teachers eligible for	Number of applicants per position by position type. New teachers' performance will be tracked using evaluation data to inform future recruiting.

			recruitment incentives.	
Selection/ Hiring	Interviews for new hires are currently conducted by TLT members. Educator effectiveness data is utilized when available.	Number of qualified applications hired and retention rate at each campus.	CC schools will "employ and retain the best qualified personnel." The district will consider available teacher effectiveness data to fulfill its commitment to employing the best qualified personnel. TLT will continue to lead interview process.	Monitor new hires performance and use to target support
Placement	Teachers are placed based on alignment of training to areas of need. High-need subjects such as special education, high school math and science, honors/AP classes, remain very difficult to fill.	Number of positions available throughout district and qualified applicants.	Multiple career paths incentivize teachers to take on new leadership roles (i.e., mentor and master teacher) and additional responsibilities with corresponding increase in pay. Placement will continue based on need.	Observation / evaluation data based on job expectations and responsibilities for different types of teachers
Teacher Professional Development/ Support	PD is job-embedded and focused on the specific needs of teachers and their students.	Student assessment results.	PD will take place weekly in cluster groups led by master and mentor teachers; PD will occur during normal school hours; individualized follow up from the leadership team. Most effective teachers will be identified using evaluation data and	PD will be informed by teacher evaluation results

| | | | provided tuition and fee incentive to pursue principal certification and return to CC as a school leader. ATU will provide expert faculty to support targeted professional development needs of master/mentor teachers and career teachers in CC schools where existing educators have limited capacity.

The most effective teachers in CC will meet with ATU teacher candidates training on and sharing use of TAP teacher evaluation rubric, and teacher and principal PD. They will also disseminate lessons learned from educator effectiveness efforts in rural community through Symposia and national conferences. | |
| Principal Professional Development/ Support | Principal PD held monthly during Administrative meetings, however does not address each campus' specific needs based on TAP data. | Student Achievement data, campus walkthrough | PD in areas of collaboration, feedback, coaching will be provided on site and in regional trainings. Effective principal will share | PD will be informed by CODE reports and analytics |

		reports, overall TAP averages.	expertise with ATU students and participate in Symposium.	
Tenure	Not applicable – AR is a right to work state.	n/a	Not applicable – AR is a right to work state.	n/a
Dismissal	Following state and district policy.	Evaluation data	Following state and district policy. Educator effectiveness data will be used to support dismissal decisions if appropriate.	Evaluation data.
Retention (especially of teachers in hard-to-staff grades, subjects	Teachers receive bonuses based on multiple measures of effectiveness including individual classroom student achievement growth, score on TAP teacher evaluation rubric and school wide achievement gains. Retention remains a challenge due to salaries offered in neighboring, non-rural districts.	Teacher evaluation data by position and grade level.	All effective educators will be eligible for a $1000 retention bonus for continuing contracts. Highly-effective educators in hard-to-staff subjects recruited as part of the ATU partnership will be eligible for $10,000 retention award for continuing contract.	Teacher evaluation data by position and grade level.
Teacher Evaluation	Teachers are evaluated using the TAP rubric, schoolwide value added score and individual classroom value added score.	SKR scores, classroom VA score, schoolwide VA score,	Teachers are evaluated using the TAP rubric, schoolwide value added score and individual classroom value added score.	SKR scores, classroom VA score, schoolwide VA score, overall effectiveness rating

		overall effectiveness rating		
Principal Evaluation	Principals are evaluated using Arkansas' LEADS rubric, along with the TLT	Schoolwide VA, TLT observation, and LEADS rubric	Principals will be evaluated through student performance (schoolwide value add), NIET's TLT observation, and AR LEADS rubric.	Schoolwide VA, TLT observation, and LEADS rubric will be combined to create an overall measure of effectiveness annually
Teacher Bonuses, Performance Pay or other incentives	Teachers can earn augmentations by taking on additional roles as master or mentor teachers; teachers may earn incentives based on their effectiveness.	SKR scores, classroom VA score, schoolwide VA score, overall effectiveness rating	Teachers can earn augmentations by taking on additional roles as master or mentor teachers; teachers may earn incentives based on their effectiveness.	SKR scores, classroom VA score, schoolwide VA score, overall effectiveness rating
Principal Bonuses, Performance Pay or other incentives	Principals may earn additional incentives based on their overall effectiveness scores	Schoolwide VA, TLT observation, and NIET Principal rubric will be	Principals may earn additional incentives based on their overall effectiveness scores	Schoolwide VA, TLT observation, and LEADS rubric will be combined to create an overall measure of effectiveness annually

		combined to create an overall measure of effectiveness annually		
Career Advancement Opportunities	Limited access to career paths available for current teaching staff.	Number of positions available throughout district and qualified applicants.	Teachers with a record of effectiveness may take on the role of master or mentor teacher	SKR scores, classroom VA score, schoolwide VA score, overall effectiveness rating

(3) The human capital strategies the LEA uses or will use ensure that High-Need Schools are able to attract and retain effective Educators.

As a small, rural, remote district, both CC schools and nearly all of the students are high-need. All efforts to attract and retain effective educators, as described in Table 4 will ensure that high-need schools are able to attract and retain effective educators. Through the implementation of the TAP System, CC has made strides in attracting more effective teacher candidates. However, due to higher salaries and benefits, as well as social and cultural opportunities afforded by neighboring, more urban or suburban districts, it has become increasingly difficult to retain the most effective teachers. Further, as noted above, the decrease in Teach for American participants has negatively impacted teacher recruitment.

As such, the partnership with ATU will target the most highly effective teachers who will chose to work in CC, and then substantially incentivize these educators not only for their effectiveness, but also their commitment to the students of the community. As more effective teachers are retained, the collaborative culture will further strengthen leading to more reason for other teachers to remain in CC as well.

Effective educators will also be attracted by the opportunity to share their knowledge with teacher candidates at ATU and to participate in national conference, such as ASCD. All too often, educators in rural communities do not have the opportunity to participate in national or regional education events. The activities outlined in this grant will provide a unique opportunity for effective educators from a rural district to contribute to the national conversation about school reform.

Requirement 1: Implementation of Performance-based Compensation System

The proposed TIF grant is based on a comprehensive, results-oriented, successful model of educator development, evaluation and compensation with proven positive impacts on students and educators nationally, specifically in CC. The TAP System includes differentiated levels of compensation based in part on measurable increases in student academic achievement; and differentiated levels of compensation, in the form of salary augmentations, on the basis of roles and responsibilities. The system also provides bonus pay for effective teachers, principals and other school leaders in hard-to-staff schools and high-need subject areas. Finally, the TAP PBCS recognizes the skills and knowledge of educators as demonstrated through teacher leadership roles and evidenced by the mastery of content knowledge and superior teaching and leadership skills. In this project, enhancements and additional innovative practices are included to build upon the successes and address some of the deficits in the current system.

Evaluating and Compensating Teachers

Teacher effectiveness will be evaluated *annually* based on several measures, including student achievement growth at the classroom and school-wide level, the average of scores from at least four classroom observations each year, and a teacher responsibilities survey.

Multiple observation-based assessments per year. CC teachers are evaluated by members of the TAP Leadership Team (i.e., principal(s), master and mentor teachers) at least four times a year in announced and unannounced classroom observations using the Skills and Knowledge rubric from the *TAP Skills, Knowledge and Responsibilities Performance Standards* (*Standards*). Evaluators are annually recertified before conducting evaluations. The Standards cover "Instruction," "Designing and Planning Instruction," and "The Learning Environment" as defined in 19 indicators scored on a 5-point rubric that ranges from Unsatisfactory (1) to

Proficient (3) to Exemplary (5). See Figure 3 for an example indicator and Appendix F for the complete rubric.

Figure 3: Indicator from the Standards - "Academic Feedback"

	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Academic Feedback	• Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality. • Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress, and provide individual feedback. • Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction. • Teacher engages students in giving specific and high-quality feedback to one another.	• Oral and written feedback is mostly academically focused, frequent, and mostly high quality. • Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement and monitor student work. • Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor and adjust instruction.	• The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent. • Feedback is rarely given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior. • Feedback from students is rarely used to monitor or adjust instruction.

All teachers are taught the elements of the rubric and thoroughly trained prior to the observation tool being used, providing them with the standards to which they will be held accountable before they are evaluated. TAP teacher evaluations produce more than a score; before each announced visit, teachers have a "pre-conference" session with their evaluator to discuss expectations and areas of focus. Then after all classroom observations, there is a "post-conference" session with the evaluator to discuss the findings. As a CC master teacher noted, "Prior to TAP, I'm not sure I knew what a refinement area was. I did not reflect on teaching. TAP provides opportunity for true growth. Without the rubric descriptors, that is not possible."

Responsibilities survey. Leadership performance standards are established for master, mentor and career teachers, providing an additional measure of educator effectiveness. These performance standards are measured using a survey that takes into account the different responsibilities and leadership roles of the educators in each position. The survey is scored on a 5-point rubric that ranges from Unsatisfactory (1) to Proficient (3) to Exemplary (5). The average score on the responsibilities survey is combined with the average scores on the observation-based rubric (Skills and Knowledge) to form a final SKR score. See Figure 4 for an example indicator and Appendix F for the complete rubric.

Figure 4: Responsibilities Survey - "Growing and Developing Professionally"

Performance Standard	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Unsatisfactory (1)
3. The career teacher develops and works on a yearly plan for new learning based on analyses of school improvement plans and new goals, self-assessment, and input from the master/mentor teacher and principal observations.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely

Student growth measures. Teacher effectiveness and differentiated compensation depend in

significant part on student growth measures. This includes student growth in the school as a

whole, and also within individual classrooms. For grades and subjects with available state or

benchmark tests, CC uses a "value-added" model from SAS, a reputable provider of value-added

calculations, to measure the contributions of teachers and schools to student achievement during

a school year at both the classroom and school level. Value added is a well-established and

widely recognized methodology for determining student growth. Beyond tracking the difference

in scores of the same students from one year to the next, value added estimates the impact

schools and teachers have on student learning isolated from other contributing factors such as

family characteristics and socioeconomic background (Braun, 2005; Goldschmidt, et al., 2005).

As such, value-added analysis provides a way to measure the specific effect a school or teacher

has on student academic performance over the course of a school year or another period of time.

Value-added analysis can be used to differentiate ineffective and effective levels of teacher and

school performance as referenced against rigorous standards of expected student growth for an

academic year (Goldhaber, 2010; Glazerman et al., 2011). Although some may suggest that

value added scores may fluctuate, educators in CC have found this measure to be valid and

consistent with the experiences they are having in their schools. Indeed, though any single

measure of performance will contain error and only capture one aspect of performance, used in

concert with other measures of performance value added remains a highly predictive measure of future student gains (Steele et al., 2010).

For grades and subjects without state or benchmark tests, the CC TIF Advisory Committee (described later) will explore alternative measures to include in the effectiveness measure. In the past, CC teachers without classroom value-added had their bonuses calculated based 50% on the school value-added score. With a culture that now focuses on educator effectiveness and has seen the benefits of a fair and transparent performance-based compensation system, CC will move forward with identifying additional measures to include in the PBCS for teachers in classrooms that do not have state or benchmark assessments. Among other things, the TIF Advisory Committee will survey other schools nationwide that have developed alternative measures of student achievement growth and determine the best measure to include in CC.

Generating an overall effectiveness rating for teachers. Supported by a 100% approval of TAP implementation, the CC school leadership teams generate an annual overall effectiveness rating for each teacher. Effectiveness is calculated using the following framework:

Table 5: Teacher Evaluation Percentages

Teachers with classroom VA	Teachers with/out classroom VA
SKR Score*=50%	SKR Score* 50%
Schoolwide Value-Added Score=30%	Schoolwide Value-Added Score=30%
Classroom Value-Added Score=20%	Alternative measure (TBD)=20%

Table 6: Effectiveness Ratings

Weighted Average Score	Overall Evaluation Rating
1.0 – 1.99	Unsatisfactory
2.0 – 2.99	Developing
3.0 – 3.99	Proficient
4.0 – 5.00	Exemplary

"Unsatisfactory" teachers are ineligible for performance pay. Teachers will automatically fall into the "Unsatisfactory" performance rating if they do not meet performance minimums on the SKR score (average score below a 2.0); classroom value-added (score below a 2.0); or alternative measure (score below a 2.0). Both "Developing" and "Proficient" bands contain effective teachers. "Exemplary" teachers are highly effective. A low school wide value-added score will not result in a teacher automatically falling into the lowest category, as we do not want to discourage otherwise effective teachers from moving to struggling schools. The following table illustrates outcomes for three teachers at the same school.

Table 7: Example Evaluation Outcomes

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
SKR Score	2.5 * 50% = 1.25	1=Automatic "Unsatisfactory" 1 * 50% = 0.5	4 * 50% = 2
Schoolwide VA	4 * 20% = 0.8	4 * 20% = 0.8	4 * 20% = 0.8
Classroom VA	2 * 30% = 0.6	2 * 30% = 0.6	5 * 30% = 1.5
Weighted Avg Score	2.65	1.9	4.3
Effectiveness Rating	Developing	Unsatisfactory	Exemplary

Evaluating and Compensating Principal/Assistant Principal (Principal)

Principal effectiveness will be evaluated *annually* based on student achievement growth at the school level, scores on the state of Arkansas' LEADS evaluation rubric, and TAP Leadership Team (TLT) observation scores.

Multiple observation-based assessments per year. Principals will be observed two or more times a year during the TAP Leadership Team (TLT) meetings by the CC Superintendent. TLT meetings occur weekly and drive the implementation of the TAP model at the building level, helping to ensure a strong degree of fidelity to TAP implementation. One of the principal's main responsibilities during these meetings is to facilitate them as the instructional leader in the school.

Student growth measures. A significant portion of principal effectiveness will depend on student growth measured by school-wide value-added scores.

Generating an overall evaluation rating for principals. Half of the principal evaluation rating will depend on schoolwide value-added scores, 30% will depend on LEADS assessment, and 20% will depend on the average score from TLT observations.

Requirement 2: Documentation of High-Need Schools

CC is designated by the National Center for Educational Statistics as a "remote rural" district. As demonstrated in Table 1, over 70% of all students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch subsidies under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. Given the high percentage of students in poverty, both Cross County Elementary School and Cross County High School are designated as high-need schools.

Competitive Preference Priority 1 – Supporting High Need Students

This grant is designed to improve the academic outcomes for all students served in the CC schools. The implementation of the TAP System, complimented by the use of a HCMS that supports the instructional vision of the district, emphasizes CC's commitment to improving academic outcomes for students. CC's mission to educate the whole child by preparing them to be life-long learners and responsible citizens in a global society is at the core of their academic programs. The implementation of a research-based, educator effectiveness system was done so with the intent to improve achievement for all CC students.

Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Improving Teacher Effectiveness and Promoting Equitable Access to Effective Educator

The implementation of the enhanced TAP System and the connected comprehensive HCMS focuses on the priority of improving educator effectiveness for all teachers and administrators in CC. Given the small size of the district, and the pervasive level of poverty among all students, everyone benefits from CC's efforts to improve educator effectiveness. There is not one school that benefits more than another, nor is there a particular group of students who benefit over another. All students are positively impacted by the evaluation and support system that is fair, rigorous, valid, reliable and objective. As described, the TAP System's evaluation and support structures are based on comprehensive teacher observations, student achievement growth and other inputs. Further, decisions about professional development and support are made based on data collected through the evaluations. The link between evaluation and support in TAP schools is targeted and direct.

The Extent to Which the Proposed Project will Integrate with or Build On similar or Related Efforts to Improve Relevant Outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)), using existing funding streams from other programs or polices

Improving educator effectiveness has been and continues to be the highest priority of CC. All strategic planning and school improvement plans have focused on improving practice and policies to attract, retain and develop educators to the schools. CC has been very successful, through the implementation of the TAP System, in developing effective educators; however, they continue to be challenged with attracting new teachers and principals, as well as keeping their most successful educators.

CC is currently using existing districts funds to support ongoing implementation of the TAP System, and will continue to use these funds moving forward. In addition, CC will aggressively pursue other streams of funding that support all efforts to improve educator effectiveness. Funds that are currently being used, and will continue to be used, include local funding, state National School Acts funding (based on poverty), and Title II(A) funding. CC will also leverage partnerships, such as those with ATU and NIET, to develop capacity and effectiveness among district educators.

Invitational Priority-Promoting equitable access through state plans to ensure equitable access to excellent educators.

The table below demonstrates how the proposed project promotes equitable access to excellent educators consistent with the state of Arkansas' Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

Table 8: Alignment to Arkansas Equity Plan

Arkansas Equity Plan Summary Strategies	CC's TAP System Strategies
Attract & Prepare	TAP's Performance-Based Compensation System enables rural districts to attract educators through incentives tied to effectiveness. The ongoing, applied professional growth element of TAP focuses on job-embedded PD that relates specifically to the needs of students and educators within a school.
Develop, Support & Retain	Ongoing, applied professional growth: Job-embedded PD focused on the specific needs of students and educators within a school. Targeted incentives focus on retaining the most effective educators.
Leverage Agency Resources	Partnering with national organizations and state universities leverages human capital to support teacher effectiveness. Further, sustainability is driven by maximizing existing resources to maintain HCMS and PBCS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE EVALUATION PROCESS

High quality plan to support all educators

The TAP System's ongoing, applied professional development incorporates two strategies that research has found to be effective—collaborative learning teams and instructional coaching (Biancarosa et. al, 2010; Sanders et. al, 2009). But TAP also takes the next critical step by helping schools create an infrastructure that supports high-quality PD and ensures that the activities ultimately deliver positive results, both for teachers and for their students. The TAP

System combines collaborative teams and classroom coaching to maximize the potential impact of both strategies.

CC teachers receive one-on-one coaching from master teachers and mentor teachers. These same teacher-leaders also lead collaborative teams of teachers called "cluster groups," which meet weekly to learn and develop new classroom strategies and to analyze the impact of those strategies on student learning. After every cluster meeting, master and mentor teachers provide targeted follow-up coaching to help teachers master and effectively implement the strategies they worked on during the meeting, carefully calibrated to meet each teacher's individual needs. The districts' master and mentor teachers will also serve on a schoolwide TAP Leadership Team, led by the principal, which will set clear goals for cluster groups and monitors their progress to ensure success. Underlying TAP's powerful model of professional development is the TAP System Training Portal (Appendix F), an interactive Web tool that provides individualized trainings, resources and support for all educators. The following chart provides an illustration of how the PD system works in CC schools.

Figure 3: Overview of TAP Professional Development

The leadership team monitors student data across cluster groups and decides when cluster cycle goals have been met and a new cluster cycle can begin.

Master teachers share results with the leadership team, who analyzes data and makes adjustments.

Career teachers bring back analyzed student work to cluster to debrief.

Career teachers implement strategies in their own classrooms with targeted support from master and/or mentor teachers.

The leadership team analyzes student data to develop school, yearly cluster, and cluster cycle goals.

Master teachers identify research-based strategies to help meet goals, and then "field-test" each strategy to customize to student needs.

Master teachers share results of the field test with the leadership team.

Master and/or mentor teachers introduce field-tested strategies in cluster groups and help career teachers practice and plan for their classrooms.

OVERVIEW OF PD

LEADERSHIP TEAM
Principal, Assistant Principals, Master Teachers, Mentor Teachers

CLUSTER GROUP
Master Teachers, Mentor Teachers, Career Teachers

CLASSROOM
Students, Career Teachers, Leadership Team member as needed

In TAP, master teachers, mentor teachers and the principal have explicit responsibility for planning and leading a range of inter-related professional development activities. While the professional development structure is common across TAP schools, the content is entirely driven by analysis of student and teacher needs in any given school. Typical professional development activities include:

Cluster Groups. TAP restructures the school schedule to provide time during the regular school day for groups of teachers to collaborate on analyzing student data and learning new instructional strategies to improve student learning. Strategies are selected by master teachers based on detailed analyses of student achievement data and are only introduced to teachers in the cluster group after the masters teachers have successfully field tested or vetted and the strategies in actual classrooms so they can demonstrate student learning gains. After master teachers introduce a new strategy, teachers use the strategy in their own classrooms, then return to cluster meetings with pre- and post-test data from formative assessments so that the group can discuss how well the strategy worked and refine it further if necessary.

How TAP uses disaggregated data from evaluation to support educators and schools

Individualized Coaching. CC structures its school schedules to enable master and mentor teachers to follow up after cluster meetings to provide every teacher with one-on-one coaching. Teacher leaders are provided training, authority, time, and additional compensation for these roles, and their work with classroom teachers is not voluntary or optional. Master and mentor teachers carefully calibrate the content and form of coaching to meet teachers' individual needs based specifically on the students in the teachers' classroom.

Master and mentor teachers regularly visit teachers' classrooms to provide highly intensive and personalized coaching that can take a wide variety of forms such as teaching demonstration
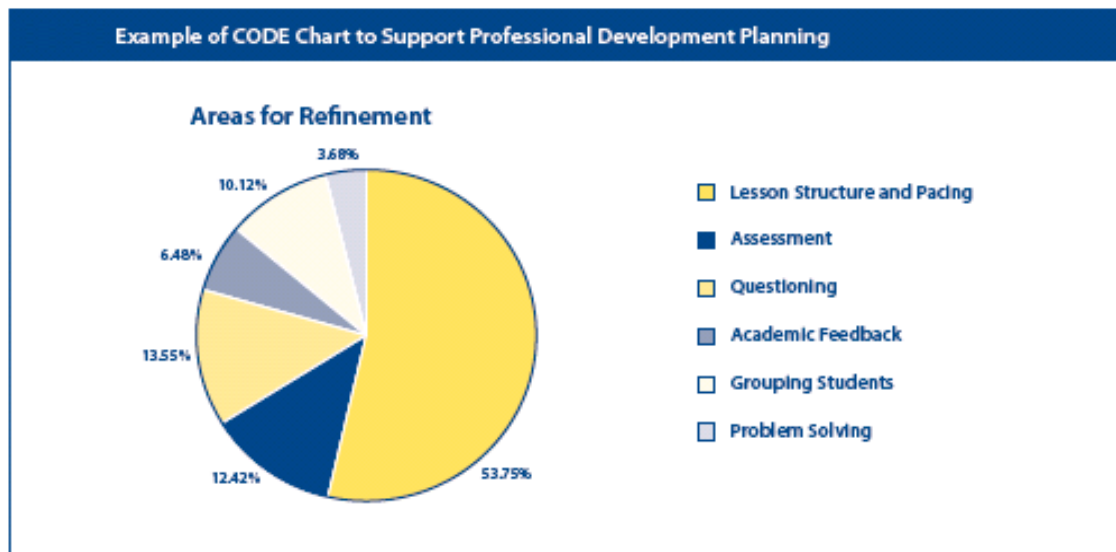
lessons, modeling specific instructional strategies or skills or team teaching. For example, master or mentor teachers often visit classrooms to coach teachers on a new instructional strategy after introducing it during a cluster group meeting. Coaching can take place outside the classroom, too: Mentor or master teachers can meet with teachers to brainstorm, troubleshoot, collaborate on lesson planning, review student work, provide feedback on teachers' plans and ideas, or to review and discuss how a lesson went Through this project, CC will make enhancements to the NIET-built infrastructure and content of the on-line TAP System Training Portal for both teachers and leadership teams in their schools to expand access to instructional videos, strategies, interactive professional development modules, and reports.

School Level Support and Planning

The leadership team analyzes school-wide areas of strength or weakness, trends by grade or subject, and individual teacher performance. The data is used to determine professional development needs for individuals and groups of teachers in TAP schools. As a result of the TAP evaluation process, every teacher in a TAP school receives an area of reinforcement (strength) and an area of refinement (weakness) through the post-conference.

The following chart, generated using CODE data, shows how often particular indicators on the TAP Rubric have been chosen as the area of refinement (i.e., area of relative weakness) during the post-conference. In this case, more than half of observations at this example school have led to the "Lesson Structure and Pacing" indicator being targeted as an area for improvement, suggesting that master and mentor teachers might want to pay particular attention to this skill in upcoming professional development.

Figure 4: Example CODE Report – Areas for Refinement

Example of CODE Chart to Support Professional Development Planning

Areas for Refinement

- ☐ Lesson Structure and Pacing
- ■ Assessment
- ☐ Questioning
- ▦ Academic Feedback
- ☐ Grouping Students
- ☐ Problem Solving

3.68%
10.12%
6.48%
13.55%
12.42%
53.75%

Enhancements to Professional Development and Support

Through this project, there are several enhancements to the currently professional development structure that will strengthen educator effectiveness and also serve as recruitment and retention tools. Through a partnership with ATU, faculty will come to CC and work with the TAP Leadership Teams targeting specific, data-determined areas of improvement related to the faculty's research and expertise. The faculty will also learn from CC teachers about effective classroom practices and real-life impact of state and federal policies. As with the determination of topics for weekly PD, the focus of this ongoing support will be determined by the specific needs of educators within CC.

Although the master and mentor teachers are determined based on their effectiveness, being in a remote, rural district can sometimes limit the scope of areas of expertise among school leaders. The ATU faculty will come to CC to help build additional capacity if needed; however, they will also learn from the TAP leaders about the application of theory into classroom practice. The relationship with ATU will be truly reciprocal as ATU will draw upon the expertise of CC

educators, in particular master and mentor teachers, to train and support teacher candidates. Effective CC teachers will travel to ATU to work with and share their experiences with teacher candidates and encourage them to apply for positions within the district.

Dissemination of Lessons Learned

Although CC has been challenged to attract and retain highly-effective educators to the district, they have begun to see shifts and know that the additional federal funding provided by the Teacher Incentive Fund will allow for further innovation and enhancements to improve the quality of educators who come to the district, and most importantly to help keep effective educators in the district. Because of their own struggles, CC educators want to be able to share their experiences with other rural districts so that best practices can be disseminated, and missteps can be avoided. The grant will provide resources for two Symposia that will focus on rural educator reform. Both meetings will be hosted by CC and highlight the teachers and administrators from the district. The first will be in Year 2 of the grant and focus on a regional rural Arkansas community. The second will take place in Year 4 of the grant and expand to include a national audience. The 2020 Rural School Effective Educator Symposium (Year 4) will focus on what CC and other rural districts across the country that are implementing the TAP System have learned. The emphasis will be on recruitment and retention of effective educators in rural schools. In addition, educators from CC will submit proposals each year of the grant to state and national conferences such as those run by the AR Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the national ASCD and the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference.

QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

CC will serve as the fiscal agent for the proposed TIF grant. The roles and responsibilities of CC personnel are noted in the "TIF Project Timeline" and in the memorandum of understandings (see Appendix E). The management plan describes CC's management structure for implementing this project. As part of this plan, CC will maintain the proposed HCMS in the high-need schools under this grant for the five years of the TIF project period. The management plan for this TIF grant is designed to fulfill the goals and objectives of this project on time and within budget.

Oversight, management and coordination of this project will ultimately be the responsibility of the TIF Project Director who will oversee and administer the grant. This will include three subsets of activities to ensure the goals and objectives are achieved on time and within budget: **oversight** of grant execution; **management** of grant activities; and **work** to implement the proposed HCMS in the CC schools. CC will use routine cost-control mechanisms that involve work and budget planning and systematic review. CC believes the key to effectively controlling project costs are detailed work and budget planning, coupled with systematic reviews of actual performance against those plans and the ability to make adjustments as required. Actual accomplishments and their costs will be compared to the planned work flows and budgets.

CC has assembled a well-qualified team who will complete their project responsibilities on time and within budget. The qualifications of the staff described below represent the full range of skills to guarantee quality and timely work on all project tasks. The time commitments these key personnel will devote to this grant are adequate to implement the project effectively. Resumes for key personnel showing their relevant training and experience are included in Appendix D. Cross County will also draw upon the expertise from NIET through bi-monthly support for additional training throughout the grant, as well as assistance for reporting and evaluation.

Table 9: Project Personnel

Project Personnel	Title	Project Role	%FTE
Carolyn Wilson	Superintendent	Will work with schools to oversee and ensure effective implementation TIF project.	In-kind
TO BE HIRED	Project Director	Will be responsible for the oversight and implementation of the grant, including adhering to all timelines and goals.	100%
Matt Mcclure	Chief Learning and Financial Officer	Will be responsible for budget and activities in partnership with ATU and NIET.	20%

CC has served as the fiscal agent to a number of other federal grants and as a remote, rural district has extensive experience with federal funding. The Project Director will allocate 100% of his or her time to accomplish the goals set forth in this grant on time and with fidelity to the TIF requirements. In addition, CC's Chief Learning and Financial Officer will devote 20% of his time to ensure fiscal integrity and also to oversee the partnerships with AUT and NIET.

In addition, upon notification of funding CC will convene a TIF Advisory Committee that may include: the TIF Project Director; each school's principal, the CC superintendent or her designee, a teacher representative from each school; and a representative from NIET. The TIF Advisory Committee will meet regularly to provide a consistent platform for systematic review of the status and improvement of the TIF project. The TIF Advisory Committee will also convene to make decisions regarding PBCS implementation, such as developing an alternative student growth measure for those who teach in non-tested subjects or grade-levels.

Based on the Committee's findings and with approval of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), changes or adaptations will be made in the implementation of the HCMS and PBCS to guarantee that all of the project's objectives are met.

Includes measurable project objectives and performance measures

In addition to the four required GPRA measures, our evaluation will collect and analyze the following measures of performance related to the goals of the project.

1: Increase the percent of effective teachers through incentives, career advancement, evaluation, and professional development.

1.a. Increase the percent of effective teachers retained each year.

1.b. Enhance the opportunity for principals to recruit teachers likely to be effective.

1.c. Increase the percent of effective teachers as defined within the TIF grant.

2: Increase the percent of effective principals through incentives, evaluation, and professional development.

2.a. Increase the percent of effective principals as defined within the TIF grant.

2.b. Increase the percent of principals retained each year.

3: Improve student achievement.

3.a. Achieve a year or more of student growth at the school level as defined within grant.

3.b. Improve annual performance on state and district tests.

Includes an effective project evaluation plan

This project will be evaluated by a third-party professional evaluator with the capacity for working with both qualitative and quantitative data. The purpose of the evaluation will be twofold: first, to provide feedback for continuous improvement in the implementation and operation of TAP in the project schools; and second, to provide an analysis of the evidence that the project is achieving its objectives and goals. The evaluator will assess progress toward and accomplishment of all of the outcome measures identified in this proposal, as described below.

In addition, the evaluator will study the implementation of TAP in the project schools during the length of the grant, including differences in fidelity to the TAP model between schools.

The evaluation will be "utilization focused" (Patton, 2002), meaning that the evaluator will provide feedback in order to make the project more successful, sustainable and replicable. The evaluator and CC, with participation from NIET if needed, will hold update meetings or conference calls at least quarterly to review plans, progress and preliminary data. The evaluator will provide an annual report to CC presenting and analyzing key data regarding project implementation, progress toward objectives and intermediate outcomes if applicable. At the conclusion of the grant period, the evaluator will assess the overall accomplishment of goals. The evaluator will also provide an analysis of lessons learned for the sustainability of TAP in these schools as well as for the possible expansion of TAP to other rural districts.

Table 10: Timeline of implementation of HCMS, PBCS

Project Milestones	Responsible Parties	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
HCMS Development & Implementation (Absolute Priority 1)						
Provide feedback to NIET quarterly to guide future development of the CODE system.	District Administration (DA), Schools	x	x	x	x	x
Add analytic and data management functionality to the CODE system.	Project Director (PD), NIET	x	x	x	x	x
CC will sign a memorandum of understanding with NIET and other parties, as applicable.*	DA, NIET, ATU	x				
Establish a TIF Advisory Committee to meet at least annually to assess the progress of meeting the stated goals of the TIF grant.	PD, DA	x	x	x	x	x
PBCS Preparation						
Career Advancement						

Project Milestones	Responsible Parties	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Establish a Staffing Committee for master and mentor teacher selection and accountability.	DA.	x	x	x	x	x
Schools conduct a staff meeting to review TAP's Multiple Career Path opportunities, including mentor and master teacher roles, responsibilities and qualifications, along with the interview and selection process.	Schools, PD	x				
All master and mentor teaching positions are posted and applications may be sent to the district personnel department.	TAP Leadership Team (TLT)	x				
Mentor and master teacher applications are reviewed by the TLT. TLT members will interview and select these teachers from the pool of qualified candidates.	TLT	x				
Master and mentor teachers will sign addendums to their contract, outlining the responsibilities, job descriptions and compensation.	Schools	x				
Professional Development						
Participating schools will restructure the school schedule to allow for ongoing applied professional growth activities to take place during the school day.*	DA, Schools	x				
The TAP Leadership Teams (TLT) of each school will meet with a NIET representative to review: cluster group assignments and schedule; roles and responsibilities; TLT meeting expectations; and preparations for the Startup of School Workshop.	TLT, NIET	x				

Project Milestones	Responsible Parties	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Provide professional learning for teachers	TLT	x	x	x	x	x
Evaluation						
Convene TIF Advisory Committee to allocate specific weight given to student growth measures, review annually	TIF Advisory Committee (TAC)	x	x	x	x	x
TIF Advisory Committee will determine alternative student growth measure and develop rubric	TAC	x	x			
Calculating Student Growth						
TAP schools will sign a form releasing student-level test data. In addition, each TAP school is required to make arrangements to have value-added calculations done through an approved external vendor.	DA, Schools	x				
PBCS Implementation: All Schools						
Schools complete TAP Core Trainings*	TLT, NIET	x				
Members of the school TLT will attend the TAP Summer Institute.*	TLT	x	x	x	x	x
Members of the school TLT will attend the annual National TAP Conference and Training.*	TLT	x	x	x	x	x
CC will work with NIET to disseminate information about their HCMS and the success of the schools to key stakeholders.*	DA, PD, NIET	x	x	x	x	x
Implement LEA-wide educator evaluation system.	DA	x	x	x	x	x
All participating schools receive a School Review.*	NIET, Schools	x	x	x	x	x

Project Milestones	Responsible Parties	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
CC will work to develop a plan for sustaining and expanding TAP beyond the life of the grant.*	DA, PD, NIET	x	x	x	x	x
PBCS Implementation: Teachers						
CC will ensure that evaluators are trained and certified, and recertified annually to ensure ratings align with national raters and value-added measures.	DA, Schools	x	x	x	x	x
Evaluation: All teachers will have received a minimum of four classroom evaluations and associated pre- and post-conference sessions.	TLT	x	x	x	x	x
CC will reward effective teachers in participating schools with performance-based compensation.*	DA	x	x	x	x	x
CC will award recruitment bonuses to teachers in high-need subjects. Including selective recruitment incentives in partnership with ATU.	DA	x	x	x	x	x
PBCS Implementation: Principals						
ATU and NIET will provide professional development for principals.	DA, ATU, NIET	x	x	x	x	x
CC will ensure that evaluators are trained.	DA, Schools	x	x	x	x	x
All principals will have received a minimum of two observation evaluations using the TLT rubric and the principal evaluation tool.	DA, Schools	x	x	x	x	x
CC will reward effective principals in participating schools with performance-based compensation.*	DA	x	x	x	x	x

Project Milestones	Responsible Parties	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Dissemination of Information						
Symposia*	DA, ATU, NIET, Schools		x		x	

* Indicates actions that will lead to project sustainability.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

PBCS Development with Input of Teachers, School Leaders and LEA: The TAP System was first developed over 10 years ago with significant input and guidance from teachers and administrators across the country. The TAP System is a bottom-up, top-down reform, which has proven to be most impactful when teachers and school administrators strongly support the effort while garnering support from district and state education leaders. Federal monies provided through the Teacher Incentive Fund provide another, very significant layer of support both in terms of funds and alignment to educational policy. NIET recommends a 70% vote of support from faculty within a TAP school. In fact, CC educators have voted nearly unanimously in favor of TAP and educators have been involved in supporting TAP implementation and developing the HMCS from the start. The decision to implement TAP was driven by teacher input and agreement, and the System continues to be implemented in the schools with strong endorsement by educators at the school, district and state level.

The CC sustainability plan includes the key elements that will ensure long-term sustainability and success of this project: building buy-in, creating capacity through training and support, increasing educator skills and driving student growth, and establishing financial sustainability.

Plan for financial sustainability. NIET and CC developed the project budget to build toward sustainability beyond the length of the grant. To demonstrate their commitment to TAP, the CC will use non-TIF funds to take over an increasing share of performance-based compensation each

year, starting in the first year of the grant. The CC will adopt **20%** in Year 1; **30%** in Year 2; **40%** in Year 3; and **50%** in Year 4. By the final year of the grant (Year 5), CC schools will fund **60%** of performance-based compensation with funds provided by other state and federal resources. In addition, CC will provide an increasing share of the performance-based retention bonuses available to the most effective teachers. Starting in Year 3, CC will adopt **20%** of the payout per year; **40%** for Year 4; and **60**% for Year 5. Specifically, CC will use local and state funding designated for rural, high-poverty schools, such as the National School Act, as well as Title II funds, including Title IIA funds under the "Highly Qualified Program," to account for a portion of non-TIF funding. Performance-based compensation is one of the largest components of the TAP budget; therefore, CC is demonstrating its commitment to implementing the TAP System by shouldering these costs.

Using existing resources, CC school will fund 1.0 FTE mentor teacher position in every school in addition to the 1.0 master teacher per school funded through this proposal. The CC leadership believes this commitment of additional human capital towards TAP implementation is essential to the long-term viability of the HCMS, PBCS and evaluation and educator support systems in the district. See Appendix E for Letters of Support that confirm CC's commitment to sustainability. Cross County is making TAP a priority by reallocating existing resources to supplement TIF funding and sustain implementation.

Sustainability also involves a commitment by key district and community stakeholders to remain engaged in the system's ongoing development. Ongoing communications efforts will build awareness, understanding and support for the PBCS and educator evaluation systems among teachers, principals, other school personnel and the community (including parents). Two primary strategies to involve key stakeholders and build lasting support will be:

TIF Advisory Committee. Upon notification of funding, as noted earlier, CC will form an advisory committee consisting of key constituents. The Committee will meet at least annually to provide a consistent platform for a systematic review of the status of the project and make decisions about issues such as PBCS weights and measures, and enhancements to the HCMS through the course of the grant.

Communications plan. CC will disseminate information through newsletters, websites and public forums throughout the year. School principals and master teachers will distribute information at staff meetings, during in-service days and through campus newsletters. See Appendix F for more detail.